

Guide to Using Your GET Units



Flexible



Guaranteed



2005-2006

February 2005



Dear GET Customer:

According to our records, your student is scheduled to attend college in fall 2005. This guide explains how to use your GET units to help pay for college and includes answers to the most frequently asked questions.

More than 35,000 public and private colleges, universities, and vocational/technical schools in the United States accept GET units. You can use your units to pay for undergraduate or graduate education on either a part-time or full-time schedule. If you have units left over after paying tuition, you can use them to pay for room and board, books and other qualified higher education expenses.

Our new payment options make it easier and more convenient than ever before. The GET Program can pay your student's school directly for college expenses. Or, if you prefer, you can pay the college directly and then request reimbursement from the GET Program.

If you have questions about your account or using your units, please call us toll-free at 1-800-955-2318 or send us an email at BenefitsInfo@hecb.wa.gov. We look forward to working with you in the coming years. Congratulations on reaching this milestone!

Sincerely,

Betty Lochner, Director

Guaranteed Education Tuition Program

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Overview

We want to make it as easy and convenient as possible for you to use your GET units to pay for college. You decide which payment option works best for you, or choose a combination of the two. Then complete the required forms online, download them from our Web site, or call us and we will mail them to you.

Option 1: Direct Payment

The GET Program pays the school directly for college expenses.

You tell us where your student is going to college and the GET Program will pay the school directly according to your request. You will need to complete two simple forms.

1. Intent to Enroll Form (by June 1, or as soon as your student has selected their school)
2. Direct Payment Form (after August 1)

Option 2: Reimbursement

You pay the school directly and then request reimbursement from the GET Program.

You tell us how much you have spent on tuition and other eligible expenses. We will then send you a reimbursement check. You will need to complete a Reimbursement Request Form (after August 1).

Questions?

If you have questions at any point in the process, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Email

BenefitsInfo@hecb.wa.gov

Telephone

Toll-free: 1-800-955-2318

(weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., except state holidays)

Web site

www.get.wa.gov

Mail

GET Program

P.O. Box 43450

Olympia, WA 98504-3450

IMPORTANT NOTE:

- Online account access is only available to the designated **purchaser** on the account.
- To receive assistance with online access, or to retrieve login information, the designated purchaser should call GET customer service at 1-800-955-2318.
- All forms require the designated purchaser's and beneficiary's signatures.

Direct Payment Option

You tell us where your student is going to college and the GET Program will pay the school directly for tuition and on-campus room and board. (All distributions from GET accounts require the participation and approval of the purchaser.)

Use this option for current or upcoming school terms. If you need to request a direct payment for a school term in the past, please call us.

Note: Beginning with the 2005-2006 academic year, we will no longer accept school invoices for payment.

To complete the Direct Payment Option, you will need to know the "payout value" of a GET unit. We determine this value and post it on our Web site in August after the state public universities have set their tuition rates. One GET unit is equal to 1 percent of resident undergraduate tuition, plus state-mandated fees, at the most expensive public university in Washington state at the time of use.

Remember: You can use GET units at private or out-of-state schools, but you will be responsible for the difference between the value of your GET units and the cost of the school.

Online

Our online process is the easiest and fastest way to complete your payment request. The GET Program will mail your payment directly to the school by the date you select. (Allow a minimum of two weeks).

1. Complete and submit the Intent to Enroll Form (by June 1 or as soon as your student has selected a school)

- Visit the GET Web site at www.get.wa.gov and click on "Current Customers"
- Click on "View My GET Account"
- Follow instructions to log in to your account.
You will need your login ID and PIN
- Select "Using Your GET Benefits"
- Select "Intent to Enroll"
- Select the appropriate contract number
- Select the school and the terms your student will attend
- Read the privacy agreement (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and submit

2. Complete and submit the Direct Payment Form (after August 1)

- Visit the GET Web site at www.get.wa.gov and click on "Current Customers"
- Click on "View My GET Account"
- Follow instructions to log in to your account.
You will need your login ID and PIN
- Select "Using Your GET Benefits"
- Select "Direct Payment Request"
- Select the appropriate contract number
- Select the term for which you are requesting payment
(term for distribution)
- Enter amount and type of payment, then verify due date
(allow at least two weeks for processing)
- Review and approve all information, including the disclaimer, and submit
- Repeat the above process to schedule payments for additional terms. You may schedule payments in advance through summer term, not to exceed the amount available in your account for distribution.

By Mail

The GET Program will mail your payment to the school within 4 weeks after we receive your request.

1. Complete and submit the Intent to Enroll Form (by June 1 or as soon as your student has selected a school)

2. Complete and submit the Direct Payment Form (after August 1)

Download both forms from the "Brochures and Forms" section of the GET Web site. (If you do not have Internet access, please call us and we will mail the forms to you.) Send all forms to the GET Program office.

Note to University of Washington/Washington State

University Students: If you have 100 GET units eligible for use at the beginning of the 2005-2006 academic year, you can choose to automatically spread the 100 units equally over the school terms.

Reimbursement Option

You pay your college expenses and then request reimbursement from the GET Program. Although you do not submit receipts with your Reimbursement Request, you need to maintain documentation that you used the reimbursed funds for qualified higher education expenses, as required by the Internal Revenue Service. (All distributions from GET accounts require the participation and approval of the purchaser.)

Online

Our online payment process is the easiest and fastest way for GET to reimburse you. The GET Program will mail you, the purchaser, a check within 14 business days.

- Visit the GET Web site at www.get.wa.gov and click on "Current Customers"
- Click on "View My GET Account"
- Follow instructions to log in to your account.
You will need your login ID and PIN
- Select "Using Your GET Benefits"
- Select "Reimbursement Request"
- Select the appropriate contract number
- Select the type and amount of expenses for which you are requesting reimbursement
- Certify that your reimbursement request is for qualified higher education expenses and submit (see below)

By Mail

The GET Program will mail you a check within 4 weeks.

- Download the Reimbursement Request Form from the "Brochures and Forms" section of the GET Web site. (If you do not have Internet access, please call us and we will mail the form to you)
- Fill out the appropriate sections including term, type and amount of reimbursement, and have the request signature notarized (notary is required to verify signature authenticity).
- Submit complete, notarized Reimbursement Request Form to GET Program.

Qualified Higher Education Expenses

You can use your GET units to pay for any qualified higher education expenses listed below. For more information, review Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Publication 970 "Tax Benefits for Higher Education". The publication is available on the IRS Web site (www.irs.gov) or by calling the IRS at 1-800-829-1040.

Tuition	Full-time or part-time tuition Regular academic year or summer program Undergraduate or graduate/professional program
State-mandated fees	Operating, building, and services and activities fees (S&A) approved by the State of Washington (Revised Code of Washington 28B.15.020 and 28B.15.041)
College-specific fees	Schools may impose their own fees such as technology fees, library fees, recreation fees, and fees to secure re-payment of bonded indebtedness. These fees are not considered state-mandated fees and, therefore, are not included when determining the GET payout value amount. However, you may use your GET units to pay these additional fees if you have extra units available after paying tuition and state-mandated fees.
On-campus room and board	Amount cannot exceed the typical room and board charged by the college or university
Off-campus living expenses	Maximum amount per academic year: \$1,500 if the student is living with a parent/guardian \$2,500 if the student is not living with a parent/guardian
Books, supplies and equipment	Expenses required for college attendance
Special needs	Expenses required for college attendance for students with special needs (Please call us for more information.)

Frequently Asked Questions

Last year, I completed a School Invoice Authorization Form to have the school bill GET for qualified higher education expenses. Can I still use this form?

No. Beginning with the 2005-2006 academic year, we will no longer use the School Invoice Authorization Form in our payment process. If you would like the GET Program to pay your student's school directly, please complete the Intent to Enroll Form and Direct Payment Form. Please see page 3 for detailed instructions.

Do I need to complete new Intent to Enroll and Direct Payment forms every year?

Yes. If you would like the GET Program to pay your student's school directly, you will need to complete a new Intent to Enroll Form every year even if your student attends the same school. You also will need to complete a Direct Payment Form every year. In addition, you will need to submit new forms should your student change schools mid-year.

My student graduated from high school but is not going to college right away. What are my options?

- You can wait to use your GET account. Your GET units will remain in your account and continue to grow in value. Your student must begin using his or her GET units within the next 10 years. We will mail you a new "Guide to Using Your GET Units" in the spring of each year.
- You can transfer your account to a member of your student's immediate family.
- You can request a refund. For details, review the GET Cancellation and Refund Policy on the GET Web site.

How do I determine how many GET units I can use this year?

You can use your GET units after they have met the following requirements:

- They have been held in your account for at least two calendar years from the date of purchase.
- If you have a Custom Monthly account, your contract must be paid in full.

Please call us if you have specific questions. You also can view your account information on the GET Web site by selecting "My GET Account."

How many units can I use per academic year?

You can use up to 125 eligible GET units per academic year, plus any unused units rolled over from previous years of eligibility. For example, if you have 500 units and use only 100 units for your student's first year of college, you may use up to 150 units in the second year (125 units plus 25 units from the first year).

If you have unused units after paying tuition and fees, you can use those units to cover other qualified higher education expenses, including college-specific fees, room and board (on or off-campus), books, and required supplies. You will need to submit a Reimbursement Request Form for off-campus living expenses, books, and other supplies.

Can the reimbursement be payable to the student beneficiary?

Yes. Note, the completely filled out Reimbursement Request Form must be signed by the purchaser and notarized (for signature verification) before submittal.

Can I use GET units for college expenses other than tuition?

Yes. If you have eligible unused GET units after paying tuition and fees, you can use them to pay for room and board (on- and off-campus), and required books, supplies and equipment. *Review the list of qualified higher education expenses on page 4.*

How do I determine the value of my account?

One GET unit is equal to 1 percent of the resident undergraduate tuition, plus state-mandated fees, at the most expensive public university in Washington state at the time of use. We determine this value, known as the "payout value," at the beginning of each academic year after the state public universities set their tuition rates. Please check our Web site or call us after August 1 for the payout value for the next academic year.

Example 1:

Your student attends a public college in Washington state

Your student is attending The Evergreen State College and you have 115 eligible GET units. For the 2004-2005 academic year, the value of one GET unit was \$51.54.

Tuition at Evergreen is equal to approximately 78 units, depending on course load. Consequently, after paying tuition, you may have about 37 GET units left. You can use these units for books, housing, or other required college costs or roll them over for use in the following year.

Example 2:

Your student attends a private or out-of-state college

Your student attends the University of Idaho as a non-resident. You would like to use 100 GET units to help cover college costs. For the 2004-2005 academic year, the value of one GET unit was \$51.54. Your 100 units are worth \$5,154. You can use that amount to help offset your total college cost. You and your student are responsible for covering any remaining costs.

Note: *The GET payout value for the 2005-2006 academic year will be determined after August 1st, 2005.*

Where can I use my GET units?

You can use your GET units at any eligible public or private college, university or vocational/ technical school in the United States, as well as selected colleges in many countries around the world. A college is eligible if it participates in federal financial aid programs through the U.S. Department of Education.

Keep in mind that your GET units may not be enough to cover the full cost of tuition and fees at private or out-of-state schools. Enrollment in the GET Program does not guarantee in-state resident tuition or admission to any school.

To determine which schools accept GET units, or to verify a federal school code, visit the search page on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Web site at: www.fafsa.ed.gov/fotw0506/fslookup.htm. If the school is listed, it will accept GET units.

Can I use GET units at schools outside the United States?

Yes. You can use your GET units at hundreds of schools outside the United States. Visit the search page on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Web site at www.fafsa.ed.gov/fotw0506/fslookup.htm to determine which schools outside the United States accept GET units or to verify a federal school code. Select the appropriate academic year and choose "foreign country" from the drop-down list next to "state." If the school is listed, it can accept GET units.

In general, there are two ways to use GET units to pay for qualified higher education expenses outside of the United States:

- If the student is enrolled at a school outside the United States that has a federal school code, the GET Program will mail the payments directly to the foreign school.
- If the student is enrolled in a foreign studies program at a school in the United States that has a federal school code, the GET Program will mail the payments directly to the school in the United States that administers the foreign studies program.

Please contact us at 1-800-955-2318 if you have additional questions.

Can I use my GET account for graduate school and/or Running Start costs?

You can use your GET account for graduate school, medical school, law school, and many other higher education programs. However, if the tuition is higher than the resident undergraduate tuition at Washington's most expensive public university, you and your student will need to pay the difference.

You cannot use your GET account for Running Start. State law prohibits GET accounts from being used for any expenses related to the Running Start program. (Washington's Running Start program allows high school students to take college classes and earn high school and college credits.)

What if my student transfers to a different school?

You will need to complete a new Intent to Enroll Form as soon as possible through the GET Web site. A Direct Payment Form will be needed to initiate a payment to the school.

What if my student reduces his or her course load from full-time to part-time, or withdraws from school after the add-drop date has passed?

If your student withdraws from school after the school has received payment from your GET account, the school may refund all or part of your GET distribution to you, depending on its refund policy. A refund is considered a non-qualified expense and may have tax implications. For more information, please review IRS Publication 970 Tax Benefits for Education at www.irs.gov.

How will GET units affect financial aid?

At this time, you do not have to report your GET benefits on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is the application most colleges and universities use to determine whether a student is eligible for need-based financial aid. (This may change in future years if Congress amends the Higher Education Act of 1965.)

However, you do need to list your GET units as a resource when filling out college aid applications. If you do not tell your student's school about his or her GET units, the school may recalculate your student's financial aid award package when a GET payment is made. This recalculation may result in a lower financial aid award.

A GET account may affect your student's eligibility for need-based financial aid. However, GET units also may reduce the need for student or parent loans.

What if my student receives a scholarship?

If your student receives a scholarship or waiver that covers tuition and fees, you can use your GET units to cover room and board, books and other qualified higher education expenses. You also can use your GET units in the future, transfer them to a family member, or request a refund of up to 125 units per academic year without penalty. For details, review the GET Cancellation and Refund Policy on the GET Web site.

What is considered a scholarship?

Scholarships are usually grants awarded to students for academic, athletic, musical or other special abilities. Scholarships also include appointments to U.S. military academies and certain tuition discount benefits for children of college or university employees. Scholarships do not include need-based financial aid, such as student loans or work-study programs.



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The GET Program is administered by the Washington
State Higher Education Coordinating Board.